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ABSTRACT

This paper presents some of the ideas of three early contributors to the junior college movement in the United States (William Watts Folwell, Henry Phillips Tappan, and William Rainey Harper). All three of these men agreed that the first two years of college should be within the realm of secondary schools, or, at least, distinct from the university. The influence of these three men, as well as others, represented the downward extension of higher education and, consequently, the creation of the two-year college. The rising need for paraprofessionals has also provided an impetus for the two-year college movement. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (RC)

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FOLWELL, TAPPAN AND HARPER -

EARLY PROPONENTS OF THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

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Introduction

Since 1900, and even earlier, the American system of public education has been undergoing a modification or reorganization with reference to "fitting" the two-year junior college into the general scheme. This far-reaching reorganization is often subtle, indirect, and sometimes completely inconsistent with the more dominant educational themes or plans.

This paper deals with some of the early factors that eventually led to the development of community junior colleges. Our present two-year colleges are seen as indirect by-products of various individual efforts. Their development has progressed rapidly but is still incomplete. Ironically, the centralized efforts of these colleges still gain impetus at a time when other attempts are being made to decentralize higher education in this country.

Among the various forces that influenced the early junior college were societal factors, democratization, socio-economic factors, curricular innovation, and certain outstanding universities and their leaders. Significant

among the latter were William Watts Folwell at the University of Minnesota, Henry Phillips Tappan at the University of Michigan, and William Rainey Harper at the University of Chicago.

William Watts Folwell

Folwell, like Harper, Tappan, White and others was a leading proponent of university reform in this country. He, like the others, was greatly influenced by the German system of education. Accordingly, he felt that a large part of the work done in the nineteenth-century American college was on a par with the German secondary schools or gymnasia (Brubacher and Rudy, p. 259).

In his 1869 inaugural address at the University of Minnesota, he suggested the following:

> [Relegate to the secondary schools] . . . those studies which now form the body of work for the first two years in our ordinary American colleges. It is clear that such a transposition must . . . be made. How immense the gain . . . if a youth could remain at the high school or academy, residing in his home, until he had reached a point, say, somewhere near the end of the sophomore year . . . then . . . emigrate to the university, there to enter upon the work of a man . . . (Folwell, pp. 37-38).

Subsequently, President Folwell worked out a plan in harmony with his conception of the secondary schools taking a greater burden of the work load from the universities, an idea that later gave great support to the establishment of junior college departments in the high

schools. Later he refers to a general European influence:

> While American experience formed the guide and principle of the arrangement under discussion, that of foreign countries, in which education has been authoritatively organized could not be left out of account. The new secondary department will be found to correspond in location, in object, and in scope, with the lyceums of France and Switzerland. Upon this point I am happy in having the conclusive testimony of President McCosh [of Princeton] who says, "The course of instruction in the gymnasia and real schools . . . embraces not only the branches taught in our high schools, but those taught in the freshman and sophomore classes of our university courses." My own observation not long before, brought me to the same conclusion . . . (Folwell, pp. 103-104).

Folwell goes on to ask for high schools of more generous scope than ever before and affirms that "the work of the first two years of college is the work of the secondary school, and there it can be done most efficiently and economically" (Folwell, pp. 108-109). He even proposed to include a junior college as an integral part of the secondary schools in Michigan (Brubacher and Rudy, p. 259). The result then included an 8-6, 6-3-5, or a 6-4-4 organizational structure.

His ideas suggested that college work should be differentiated from university work. Furthermore, the American college was not really collegiate at all and its function could best be performed in the upper levels of secondary schools. As such, these upper levels were to be junior college departments. They were usually operated in close cooperation with the high school--often sharing

faculty, facilities, and principal.

Henry Phillips Tappan

Among the first American leaders of higher education who suggested a reorganization of institutional purpose along the lines of the European plan was Tappan, former President of the University of Michigan. As early as 1851, he proposed several plans which had many features of the German university as its model (Tappan).

Tappan had gone overseas to attend German institutions and was thoroughly devoted to the German system of higher learning. Wayland, a classmate from Union, had great influence on Tappan's reform (Brubacher and Rudy, pp. 105-106). Tappan favored that the student should receive his preparatory training before entering the university. To this end he suggested that the preparatory function should become the responsibility of the secondary school rather than the college. With the encouragement of Wayland's Report, he drew the attention of the colleges to threatening developments undermining their very existence (Rudolph, pp. 219-220, 238). Under his leadership dormitories were abandoned during the 1850's at the University of Michigan (Rudolph, p. 99).

In his inaugural address, Tappan was extremely

critical of the American college. He argues that colleges are merely mature academies with the power to confer degrees (Rudolph, pp. 147-167). Indeed, he describes most American colleges as being inferior to the European Gymnasiums (Brubacher and Rudy, p. 106).

While he had much difficulty advancing his reforms and was eventually dismissed, his thesis that the college and university were both involved in rudimentary courses which really belonged in other schools left its influence. For example, one Michigan high school reported:

> For the past three years we have offered courses corresponding to freshman work at the University of Michigan . . . We have sent to Ann Arbor eight or ten students who have received sufficient credit for work done in our high school to enable them to complete their college courses in three years . . . The work done in our graduate courses has been satisfactory to the University . . . (Warriner, p. 127).

One of Tappan's successors suggested the 6-4-4-2+ organizational plan as an opportunity. The first six years were the elementary grades; the next four years were the "junior high school," followed by a four-year continuation called "college;" the last two years being in preparation for professional schools or the doctorate. In defense of this proposal Angell writes:

> . . . the period at which junior college training is completed under ordinary conditions represents a more strategic line of division than either that at the end of the present high school or that at the end of the present four-year college (Angell, 25:394-395).

Tappan's influence could still be seen in the 1880's when the University of Michigan undertook to establish, within its own confines, a clear distinction between university work and college work. It was revealed that the midwestern universities were granting credit for "fifth- and sixth-year work done in the high school" (Angell, 23: 291-293). Thus, by the 1920's several universities had established working relationships with various high schools to provide junior college departments. Proposals from Illinois, Michigan, and Stanford even suggested that the first two years of college be dropped altogether (Brubacher and Rudy, p. 259).

William Rainey Harper

Harper offered the principle that studies differed greatly between the second and third years of the college course. Below that line he thought studies were "collegiate" in nature and were able to be assimilated by the secondary schools. Above that line, studies were to be of a university level. He writes:

> The principle that the line of separation at the close of the second college year is much more closely marked, pedagogically, than the line at the close of the present high school period . . . (Harper, pp. 1-3).

In planning for the University of Chicago, Harper clearly indicated his belief that the small four-year

college should die or become a junior college offering freshman and sophomore work only (McConaughy, pp. 607-613). Thus, in the literature, Harper is one of the first to make use of the expression "junior college" (Krug, p. 443).

Although the idea of the junior college was not original with Harper, it was he who gave the idea some enduring appeal. He would partition the four-year college into upper and lower divisions to please various interests as well as to satisfy diversified needs. His idea would offer "college" to many who would otherwise not have that opportunity. Also, his idea would include terminal programs and transfer programs, the latter permitting a higher level of efficiency in the graduate and professional schools because the resultant student body would be more select and therefore permit more advanced work. He hoped that the high schools would expand upward by assimilating the junior college years in their offerings (Brubacher and Rudy, pp. 258-259).

Angell explains that the junior college of the University of Chicago was instituted along Harper's belief that a sharp break could be made between secondary and university studies; the former representing closely supervised, routine forms of work, and the latter

emphasizing "free, specialized, professional, and research work" (Angell, 25:386).

Due to Harper's influence, a six-year high school program which included the first two years of college was established between the University of Chicago and Goshen (Indiana) High School. Terms were established whereby advanced standing was given to successful high school graduates. This plan incorporated the junior college concept completely within the high school system. Teachers, courses, examinations, and visitations were to be under University control while paid for by the high school (Hedgepeth, p. 22). While this arrangement did not receive much lasting support, it is representative of Harper's influence on the two-year college.

Harper clearly recognized the superior work being done in the high schools and in effect was asking for a realignment of the time spent in secondary and higher education. We are again confronted with this problem today.

In emphasizing the fourteenth rather than the twelfth year of schooling, it had been Harper's intent to separate the faculty into upper and lower divisions. Robert M. Hutchins, one of Harper's successors, gave this idea some reality when he organized the University of Chicago into the 6-4-4 plan. This, however, is not to indicate a desire for the junior college at all. Rather, it shows a firm conviction that liberal education should precede specialization.

In The Higher Learning in America, Hutchins voiced his concern that college aims conflict with university aims and to this end the freshman and sophomore years in the university should be abolished. In essence, he has been influenced by Harper's philosophy.

With Harper's guidance, the high school at Joliet, Illinois was rapidly involved with "postgraduate" instruction occasionally passing under the title of "junior college," but there was nothing official until the First World War (Brubacher and Rudy, p. 261).

Conclusion

The two-year community junior college has had many origins that remain imperceptible. Many have been developed as upward extensions of secondary education. And others have developed as a downward extension of higher education. Still others have come into existence on their own accord to fill an educational gap for alternatives in post-secondary higher education.

The healthy influence of Folwell, Tappan, Harper and others was decisive and represented the downward extension of higher education. The various origins of the junior college have long since blended into a national effort. Growth has been phenomenal such that there are now about 1,000 such institutions growing at the rate of

one per week. Furthermore, about one in three who begin a higher education venture do so at a two-year college. Brubacher states that it would have been impossible to accommodate the phenomenal increase in students had it not been for the growth of junior colleges. It appears that supporters of the junior colleges tend to affirm the Jacksonian or egalitarian theory of democracy.

The rise of middle jobs, semi- and paraprofessionals, technicians, and a growing health-medical professionalism at lower levels have been influencing the two-year college movement. To be sure, many are apprehensive about this role. The clear test, however, should ask, "What do they do that cannot be adequately done elsewhere?" The junior colleges are generally prepared to respond.

In concluding, I would quote from several acknowledged experts their concerns for the two-year dilemma:

> The community college has its most productive development not when it is conceived of as the first two years of the baccalaureate degree program, nor when seen as grades thirteen and fourteen, but as an institution in its own right . . . neither post-high school as such or pre-college as such . . . . (Edmund Gleazer in Friedman, p. 417).

> The people will confuse junior college and junior high school. They hardly know what they are talking about sometimes . . . (Friedman, p. 419).

> [The people] have yet to figure out fully this junior college, which insists that it is not a high school (though it offers many programs similar to those in high schools), claims to be higher education

> (while teaching printing, welding, and data processing), but is in many respects obviously unlike what the public have for years conceived higher education to be . . . . (Garrison, p. 30).

> Most junior colleges are ambivalent about their status in education. Only within the last decade has the public junior college made a major shift from being grades 13 and 14 of a public school district to being an institution of higher education . . . (Garrison, p. 30).

The relative status of the two-year college is often misunderstood due to a lack of knowledge on the part of professors according to Blocker. He cites a professional statement:

> By way of summary, to establish an inferior institution whose faculty will be composed of high school teachers, because no first class scholar will teach in a junior college when he can secure employment in a first class college or university, and whose courses of study will not prepare anyone to enter the University or fit him for life . . . Businessmen will not employ incompetent people. What is needed is for parents to send their boys and girls who have failed in high schools back to school to make up their deficiencies . . . (in Blocker and Campbell, p. 11).

> The traditionalist might say, "Of course! Let Princeton create a junior college and one would have an institution of unquestionable excellence!" That may be correct but it leads us down precisely the wrong path. . . . It would simply be a truncated version of Princeton University. A comparable meaningless result would be achieved if General Motors tried to add to its line of low-priced cars by marketing the front half of a Cadillac . . . (Gardner, p. 11).

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